long journey that he had lost sight of the fact that it existed for any other purpose. But only a few station loafers were there to greet him, and they revealed but an indifferent interest. He approached one of them.

"Can you tell me where Miss Winthrop is stopping?"

The man looked blank.

"No one of that name in this town," he finally answered.

"Isn't this Brenton?"

"It's Brenton, right enough."

"Then she's here," declared Don.

"Is she visitin'?" inquired the man.

Don nodded.

"A cousin, or something."

A second man spoke up:

"Ain't she the one who's stopping with Mrs. Halliday?"

"Rather slight, with brown eyes," volunteered Don.

"Dunno the color of her eyes," answered the first man, with a wink at the second. "But thar's some one stoppin' thar. Been here couple days or so."

"That's she," Don decided.

He drew a dollar bill from his pocket.

"I want one of you to take a note to her from me."

He wrote on the back of a card:

I'm at the station. I must see you at once.
DON.

"Take that to her right away and bring me an answer," he ordered.

The man took both bill and card and disappeared.

IT was an extremely frightened girl that within five minutes appeared upon the station platform. She was quite out of breath, for she had been running. As he came toward her with outstretched hands, she stared at him from head to foot, as if to make sure he was not minus an arm or a leg.

"Won't you even shake hands with me?" he asked anxiously.

"You—you gave me such a fright," she panted.

"How?"

"I thought—I thought you must have been run over."

He seemed rather pleased.

"And you cared?" he asked eagerly.

She was fast recovering herself now.

"Well, it wouldn't be unnatural to care, would it, if you expected to find a friend all run over?"

"And, now that you find I'm not a mangled corpse, you don't care at all."

Of course he wouldn't choose to be a corpse, because he would not have been able to enjoy the situation; but, on the whole, he was sorry that he did not have a mangled hand or something to show. Evidently his whole hand did not interest her—she had not yet offered to take it.

"How in the world did you get here?" she demanded.

"I took the train."

"But—has anything happened?"

"Lots of things have happened," he said. "That's what I want to tell you about."

He looked around. His messenger was taking an eager interest in the situation.

"That's why I came to see you," he explained. "Of course, if it's necessary to confide also in your neighbor over there, I'll do it; but I thought that perhaps you could suggest some less public place."

She appeared frightened in a different sort of way now.

"But, Mr. Pendleton—"

"I'm going to remain here perhaps a day or two," he interrupted.

To him the most obvious course was for her to ask him to meet her cousin and invite him to remain there.

"Is there a hotel in town?" he asked.

"I—I don't think so," she faltered.

"Then," he decided, "I must find some sort of camping place. If you know a bit of woods where I can spend the night, you might direct me."

He was quite himself now. It was a relief to her. And it put her quite off her guard.

"Won't you come and meet my cousin?" she invited.

He picked up his suit-case at once.

"It will be a pleasure," he answered.

She could not imagine what her cousin would think when she appeared so abruptly escorting a young man with a suit-case, but that did not seem to matter. She knew no better than her cousin what had brought him here; but, now that he was here, it was certain that she must take care of him. She could not allow him to wander homelessly around the village or permit him to camp out like a gypsy. It did not occur to her to reason that this predicament was wholly his fault. All the old feeling of responsibility came back.

As they walked side by side down the street, he was amazed to see how much good even these two days in the country had done her. There was more color in her cheeks and more life in her walk. She was wearing a middy blouse, and that made her look five years younger.

She looked up at him.

"I—I thought you had something very important to do in these next few days," she reminded him.

"I have," he answered.

"Then—I don't understand how you came here."

On the train it had seemed to him that he must explain within the first five minutes; but, now that she was actually within sound of his voice, actually within reach, there seemed to be no hurry. In her presence his confidence increased with every passing minute. For one thing, he could argue with her, and whenever in the past he had argued with her he had succeeded.

"I needed you to explain certain things to me," he replied.

She looked away from him.

"About what?" she asked quickly.

"About getting me married."

"Oh!" she exclaimed.

He could not tell what she meant by the little cry. He would have asked her had they not at that moment turned into a gate that led through an old-fashioned garden to a small white cottage.

"I'll have to run ahead and prepare Mrs. Halliday," she said.

So she left him upon the door-step, and he took off his hat to the cool, pine-laden breeze that came from a mountain in the distance. He liked this town at once. He like the elm-lined village street, and the snug white houses, and the quiet and content of it. Then he found himself being introduced rather jerkily to Mrs. Halliday—a tall, thin New England type, with kindly eyes set in a sharp face. It was evident at once that after her first keen inspection of this stranger she was willing to accept him with much less suspicion than Miss Winthrop.

"I told Sally this morning, when I spilled the sugar, that a stranger was coming," she exclaimed. "Now you come right upstairs. I reckon you'll want to wash up after that long ride."

"It's mighty good of you to take me in this way," he said.

"Laws sake, what's a spare room for?"

She led the way to a small room with white curtains at the windows and rag rugs upon the floor and a big silk crazy-quilt on an old four-poster bed. She hurried about and found soap and towels for him, and left him with the hope that he would make himself at home.

AND at once he did feel at home. He felt at home just because Sally Winthrop was somewhere in the same house. That was the secret of it. He had felt at home in the station as soon as she appeared; he had felt at home in the village because she had walked by his side; and now he felt at home here. And by that he meant that he felt very free and very happy and very much a part of any section of the world she might happen to be in. It had been so in New York, and it was so here.

He was downstairs again in five minutes, looking for Sally Winthrop. It seemed that Mrs. Halliday's chief concern now was about supper, and that Sally was out in the kitchen helping her. He found that out by walking in upon her and finding her in a blue gingham apron. Her cheeks turned very red and she hurriedly removed the apron.

"Don't let me disturb you," he protested.

That was very easy to say, but he did